

## **Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes**

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, 1 East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on July 25, 2008.

### **Members Present:**

Peter G. Cook	Dr. Kent Layton
Amanda Buscas	Lars Nielson, Jr.
Douglas Brimhall	Andrea Soto
Daniel (DJ) Harper	Ramona Tecumseh

### **Members Absent:**

Hector P. Benitez  
S. Vicente Fernandez  
Rebecca Nolan

### **Staff Present:**

Johann Zietsman	Sunnee Spencer
Tom Wilson	Jean Kaminski

Peter Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Peter Cook, Chair, asked for any additions/deletions/corrections to the minutes of June 11. There being none, Dr. Kent Layton made a motion, Daniel (DJ) Harper seconded, and all Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of June 11. They are posted on the City's Web page.

### **Items from Citizens Present:**

There were no citizens present.

### **Introduction of New Board Member – Peter Cook–**

Rebecca Nolan was unable to attend the meeting due to a death in her family; however, she had planned to join the meeting via phone. When called she had a medical emergency of her own and was not available. She will be introduced at the August 13 meeting.

### **Discuss and Take Action – Election of Chair – Peter Cook**

Daniel (DJ) Harper nominated Peter Cook as Chair for FY08-09; there were no other nominations, and Peter Cook accepted the nomination. Daniel (DJ) Harper made a motion to elect Peter Cook, by acclamation, and Dr. Kent Layton seconded. All Board members present unanimously voted to elect Peter Cook as chair.

### **Discuss and Take Action – Election of Vice-Chair – Peter Cook**

Amanda Buscas nominated Daniel (DJ) Harper as Vice-Chair for FY08-09; there were no other nominations, and Daniel (DJ) Harper accepted. Dr. Kent Layton made a motion to elect Daniel (DJ) Harper vice-chair, by acclamation, and Ramona Tecumseh seconded. All Board members present unanimously voted to elect Daniel (DJ) Harper as vice-chair.

### **Discuss and Take Action – Consider Resending Letter of January 2008 to New Council – Peter Cook**

Prior to discussion, Daniel (DJ) Harper suggested that agenda items six and seven be discussed together, Peter Cook, Chair, agreed. There was discussion on whether or not the original letter sent to the Mayor and City Council in January 2008, which requested a budget line be retained for Public Art and the Arts and Cultural Community Aid Grants with a minimum amount of \$10,000 for each, even though there would be no money expended in this fiscal year and with the hope that the programs would be restored when the economy is more stable, to the new Mayor and Council. It was decided that the letter would be sent as originally drafted with the possibility of a new cover letter describing how the Board can assist in advising the Mayor and Council in the coming year. Dr. Kent Layton made a motion to go ahead and send the original letter of January 2008 as written to Council. Douglas Brimhall seconded. After more discussion, Dr. Layton amended his motion to hold off on sending the original letter of January 2008, and draft a cover letter with the original attached. All Board Members present unanimously agreed to proceed in that manner. Daniel (DJ) Harper agreed to draft a cover letter and present to the Board members at the August 13 meeting.

### **Discussion – Consider Strategies to engage Council – Peter Cook**

This item was discussed in conjunction with the previous item. After lengthy discussion, it was decided that talking points would be created, in collaboration with staff, for the Board to use when speaking to the citizens and elected officials of Mesa. It was also discussed that the Board would visit with the new Mayor and Council Members one-on-one to educate them on the role of the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board. Talking points and one-on-one visits will be discussed in further detail at the August 13 Board meeting.

### **Discussion – Responding to RSVP request each month – Peter Cook**

There have been several months this past year when a quorum was not present and the Board was not able to conduct a meeting. As this is a waste of valuable time for those members who are present, Peter Cook, Chair, requested that Board members RSVP to Jean Kaminski at 480-644-6607 or [jean.kaminski@cityofmesa.org](mailto:jean.kaminski@cityofmesa.org), each month immediately after receiving the Board packet regarding their attendance (either way – attending or not attending).

## Staff Reports

### Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee Spencer

- “Dia de los Muertos: A Celebration of Life & Art” opens with a Members Only Preview on Thursday, August 21, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. and will open to the public on Friday, August 22.
- Hired Latonya Jordon-Smith as the new Community Arts Coordinator (marketing person). She started three weeks ago and is doing a fabulous job. Latonya comes to the Museum from *Focus* magazine with a background in broadcast journalism.
- The Museum received \$37,000 from the Arizona Commission on the Arts for general operating at support level III. Last year the Museum received \$9,000 from the Commission for operating support at level II; this year they advanced to level III. The funds go directly to supporting the Gallery Educator Program.
- With the new Curator of Education position filled, she has been able to assess the Gallery Educator Program; what skills and talents they have, create job descriptions, and utilize the talents of the Gallery Educators. Before the Gallery Educators were asked to do every possible task to make things work after the budget cuts. Those with special skills can now apply for specific Gallery Educator positions and lend their expertise in that area.
- The Museum is also anticipating a grant from AmeriCorps to help set up a teen volunteer docent program.
- Attendance is up 4% over last year – at 70,000 visitors. Combined earned and contributed income for FY07-08 was \$529,767.
- The Museum received a letter from the Smithsonian Institute on the Museum’s activities created for the “Henson” exhibit. Ms. Spencer shared an excerpt from the letter to Jeff Morris, Museum Curator: “I wish you and your colleagues could be with us to see how wonderful your hands-on activities for Henson are being loved in Washington! We are so grateful to you all that it is hard to thank you enough. We have had record visitation here and families who come into the resource room simply don’t leave – it’s phenomenal! . . . At the opening party last night, one of the guests whispered to me, ‘I wish this room (the resource room) could stay here forever!’”

### Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- Finished the year strongly: Admission was approximately 128,000, up from approximately 107,000 last year; revenue finished at just over \$500,000. The Museum gave special honor to the family that put them at \$500,000 with a picture, a plaque, and a membership to the Museum. The family came from Cave Creek to see the Museum.
- The Museum received a letter from Mayor Smith on their accomplishment and having over a million through the Museum since 2000. The Museum was thrilled to receive the recognition from the Mayor.
- July of last year, the Museum earned \$51,000 in revenue. In July this year, as of this date (July 25), the Museum has exceeded \$51,000 with close to two weeks remaining in the month. The average per day this year is approximately \$2,600, and if it holds, the Museum will see over \$60,000 in revenue for the month of June in 2008.
- Archeology for the Waveyard site will begin on September 8. The City of Mesa, The National Parks Service, and the State Historic Preservation Officer are working on a Memorandum of Understanding, which will give the Museum a permit from the Arizona State Museum. This is somewhat of a continuation of the project at Riverview, which is across the street from the Waveyard site.
- Councilmember Dena Higgins toured the Museum with Dr. Wilson and discussed issues.
- Continue to work on the MARS exhibition and improve the Museum’s Website. Staff believes the updated Website is instrumental in driving attendance up. The Mars exhibition will be the major exhibition that the Museum is doing themselves in FY08-09; the exhibition will open in October. Basically the exhibit will compare Earth and Mars. The exhibition is in collaboration with the Mars project at ASU and the Mars project at the University of Arizona. There will be a model of a Mars rover and a lander on display. Channel 5 has agreed to do weather on Mars for the Museum. Staff is still investigating whether or not they may be able to have a live feed from Mars for the exhibition.
- The Museum participated at the Friday Night Out; Dr. Wilson sat in the dunk tank – and got soaked! Mostly from his staff and family.

### Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Johann Zietsman Reported for Rob Schultz

- Performing Live is cautiously optimistic regarding ticket sales; staff is watching closely. Last year there were two large ticket items that drove beginning sales, Itzhak Perlman and Jethro Tull. We do not have those large ticket items to date; however, minus those large ticket items we are on track. Randy continues to look at adding big ticket items to the season.
- Mesa Arts Center (MAC) has received positive feedback on the new interactive Web page for MAC – check it out – [www.mesaartscenter.com](http://www.mesaartscenter.com), click on Performing Live Interactive Season Brochure. All types of programming are listed and most have a link to view what that performance would entail, for example Vince Gill, you would click on music, then click next until you see Vince Gill, there is a box in the right hand corner where you can click and view a sample of his singing style. The same goes for Broadway plays, instrumentalists, etc. Also on the site, there are suggestions to other similar performances that the patron may enjoy if they are interested in a particular artist/performance.

Because of the Interactive Brochure, MAC was able to cut printing of hard copy brochures in half and expect to cut that number in half again next year. Most people prefer to go on the Web as opposed to receiving hard copy.

Dr. Kent Layton asked if the Affiliates were part of the Interactive Brochure. Johann Zietsman replied, not yet, it may come later on; however, they are on the Main Page of Performing Live and tickets can be purchased from there to their performances.

Daniel (DJ) Harper asked if staff had considered eliminating a log-in and password in order to purchase tickets. Mr. Zietsman said he wasn't sure if that has been considered, but he would look into that.

Amanda Buscas, who is with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, expressed kudos on the Interactive site. For entertainers such as Duncan Sheik who are not well known and somewhat of a new marketing area, she now be able to link to the Interactive site to let more people know who he is as opposed to just sending a hard copy brochure with his picture and an excerpt of who he is.

- MCA will open this fall on September 12 with new exciting exhibits, "Low and Slow," a low rider exhibit featuring Mr. Cartoon, Estevan Oriol, Sadow Birk, and more, and "Beneath The Skin," an exhibit featuring tattoo artists and tattoo inspired artwork. 12 vintage car body parts have been sent to artists who are creating artwork on the car parts. A Mr. Cartoon ice cream van will also be part of the exhibit. Some of the tattoo artists will be doing tattooing on the pavement as well.
- Also on the evening of September 12, the Affiliates will be showcased with short vignettes of their performances – this will be free to the public.
- Classes are doing better than last summer; 10 – 15% increase in student enrollment and 30% increase in revenue.
- The City is installing a new water line from the chilled water system at MAC to the new courthouse. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. is torn up, but the work is scheduled to be away from MAC on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. by our openings in September.
- The new hardwood stage floor in the Ikeda is approximately 80% complete. The original floor, which was planned to be hardwood, but was valued engineered to a masonite floor, which has a life span of three – four years, was in bad need of replacement. The new hardwood floor has a life expectancy of up to 30 years.
- There were also many chairs in the Ikeda that needed to be replaced; they are under warranty.

Douglas Brimhall asked about the marquee. Mr. Zietsman reported that we had proposed two marquees on MAC campus. One that would be free standing at the end of the Shadow Walk and the other in front of the planter facing Center Street just south of Main Street. The one on the planter was approved; the free standing one was not approved due to a zoning issue. Mr. Zietsman has appealed the zoning decision to Council to overrule that decision. It will go before Council on August 18. Installation on the planter should be installed by the first of September. We will have to wait for Council's decision on the free standing marquee.

### **Director's Report – Rob Schultz reported for Johann Zietsman**

Mr. Zietsman will hold a public meeting regarding a newly proposed Mesa Arts and Culture Festival (MACFest) this coming Wednesday, July 30, at 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Piper Theater. The purpose of the meeting is to share the proposal and hear from the community what they want in terms of a festival – this is not a Mesa Arts Center or a City of Mesa Festival, it is to be a community owned and operated festival of arts and culture in downtown Mesa. The proposal is to have exhibits on Main Street and the Shadow Walk at Mesa Arts Center every Saturday from October through May; vendors purchase a ticket for a 10 x 10 space through the MAC Box Office. The idea is to make it as simple/easy and at low risk to the artists and merchants. The purpose is to revitalize downtown Mesa, support downtown merchants, and give local artists an opportunity to sell their work. Following the presentation Wednesday evening, a committee will be formed to establish goals and rules and move forward.

Target has become a significant sponsor at MAC enabling the Arts and Cultural Department to offer "Three for Free;" free admission to Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA), Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY), and Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) on Sundays.

Mr. Zietsman shared the Department's financial summary as of June 30, 2008 – final numbers will come in August (13<sup>th</sup> month numbers). MAC was budgeted to have a deficit of \$604,436, as of June 30, MAC has a deficit of \$424,971, which means MAC has accomplished \$179,465 better than budget; this number is exclusive of a \$151,000 check MAC will receive from the Mesa Arts Center Foundation to complete their cycle of contribution, which will hit in the 13<sup>th</sup> month figures, meaning MAC will have done \$300,000 better than budget. The Museums have balanced budgets, but due to charge-backs from other City Departments (IT, Facilities Maintenance, City Attorney, etc.) the City budgets the Museums with a deficit number for the City's budget purposes. AzMNH was budgeted to have a deficit of \$317,416 due to charge-backs, as of June

30, their deficit is \$69, 899, which is a performance of \$247,517 better than budget. AMY was budgeted to have a deficit of \$102,005 due to charge-backs, as of June 30, their deficit is \$73,228. AMY is expecting a check from their Friends Board, which will make their performance approximately \$78,000 better than budget. What this means is that the Arts and Cultural Department has a contract with the taxpayers that says we will do "X" with the money you have entrusted to us – we will always require some subsidy; however, this past year the Arts and Cultural Department has done \$600,000 - \$700,000 better than we what we said we would do.

### **Update of Events – Board Members – Information Only**

Amanda Buscas announced that she is pregnant and would not be able to attend in person in the months of January, February, and March. Congratulations Mandy!

Douglas Brimhall reported that he spent two weeks in New York City this summer and enjoyed the museums and the arts and culture that New York has to offer. A favorite highlight – Katz Deli!

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

**Just a note:** Peter Cook, Chair, will be out of town for the August 13 meeting, Daniel (DJ) Harper, Vice-Chair, will conduct the meeting in August.

Respectfully submitted,

Johann Zietsman, Director  
Arts and Cultural Department